



Outreach programs, peer pressure, and common sense: What motivates homeowners to mitigate wildfire risk?

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Abstract:

In recent years, altered forest conditions, climate change, and the increasing numbers of homes built in fire prone areas has meant that wildfires are affecting more people. An important part of minimizing the potential negative impacts of wildfire is engaging homeowners in mitigating the fire hazard on their land. It is therefore important to understand what makes homeowners more or less willing to take action. The research presented here comes from a study that interviewed a total of 198 homeowners in six communities in the western United States about the activities they had undertaken to mitigate their fire risk, the factors that contributed to their decisions, and their future intentions. The current paper reports on findings from the first half of the longitudinal study, after 3 years we will return to interview the current homeowner on the same properties to assess maintenance actions and facilitating and limiting factors. Overall we found a body of individuals who understand the fire risk, are taking numerous mitigation actions, and think that these actions have reduced their risk. These homeowners typically did not expect the government to do it for them: they wanted information about what to do and, in some cases, assistance with the work, but saw taking care of their property primarily as their responsibility. Responses also show that key information sources and motivating factors vary by location and that it is not inherently necessary to have relationships between community members to create defensible space.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00267-011-9704-6>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Wildfires

Geographic Feature: 

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Other Geographical Feature

Other Geographical Feature : Forest

Geographic Location: 

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Impact: 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Resource Type: 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: 

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified